



**THE 350TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION
STONES OF THE THIRD CHURCH OF ST STEPHEN WALBROOK
ON 17TH DECEMBER 1672**

The Great Fire of London of 1666 destroyed four fifths of the old City of London from the Tower of London in the east to Fleet Street in the west. It raged for four days from Sunday 2nd September to Thursday 6th September. Miraculously it is thought that only sixteen people lost their lives. St Stephen Walbrook was burnt down on the day after the fire started.



Pepys notes in his diary entry on the first day of the Great Fire on 2nd September 1666 a visit to the Tower to see the Fire. He mentions Sir John Robinson who was Lieutenant of the Tower of more later. 'Jane tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir John Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So down, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding Lane, and that it hath burned St Magnus's Church and most part of Fish Street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan, already burned that way, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steelyard, while I was there'.

Though the Church was largely destroyed there were elements of the old building left standing which were eventually demolished or provided the basis for the foundations of the new church.

In clearing the site expenses were paid out by the Vestry in 1667 for 'making ledd into Piggs', 'sending 122 Piggs led to Pontin's hoy (barge)', 'taking down ye Iron Bars in ye Church Windows' and 'watching ye Iron and removing it into ye Steeple'.

Though church services were discontinued burials were held in the church from 1667. 'Mr Edwin Brown...in yr Chansell', 'Alice Eiver in ye Bellfrey', 'William Bond Esq in ye South Quire'. These continued after the new Foundation stones were laid and work on the new Church

progressed. 'Mrs Elizabeth Brindley in the Middle Ile' and 'William Rawkins Close to the second pillar in ye north side of ye Church'.

By 1672 Britain was engaged with France against the Dutch in the Third Anglo-Dutch War. Essentially a naval conflict, a particularly famous encounter was the Battle of Sole Bay off the Suffolk coast in June of that year.

On 17th December 1672 the Foundation stones for the new Church, the third Church of St Stephen, were laid at the East end.

The principal guests at the 1672 ceremony were

- **Sir George Waterman** the Lord Mayor
- **Thomas Witty**, one of His Majesty's Privy Councillors
- **Sir John Robinson** Lieutenant of His Majesty's Tower (of London)

***Sir John Robinson (1615-1680)** was a past Lord Mayor, Member of Parliament and City of London merchant. Pepys mentioned him above in his diary entry about the Fire. Pepys (1633-1703) who as Secretary of the Admiralty worked with him closely confided in other entries that he found him 'to be a talking, bragging Bufflehead....as very a coxcomb as I could have thought had been in the City.....a vain, prating, boasting man as any I know, as if the whole City & Kingdom had all its work done by him'*

However, despite Pepys' earlier jaundiced view of Robinson, by 1672 an account of aldermen in the City found Robinson 'most industrious in the civil government of the City, watchful to prevent anything that might reflect any prejudice or dishonour upon the King's government, happy in dispatch of business, to the great contentment of the people'.

Six members from the Grocers Company who were patrons of the Church also attended. They were **William Wadd Esq, Wm Dobb Esq, Mr Jacob Bomeald, Deputy James Owtron, Major Richard Rogers and Mr John Minne.**

From the parish, there was Reverend **Robert Marriott**, the Rector, **Adrian Quiney** and **John Simpson**, the two churchwardens and parishioners **Mr Lowry Norton, Mr Wm Loddyes, Mr Gervase Cory and Mr John North.**

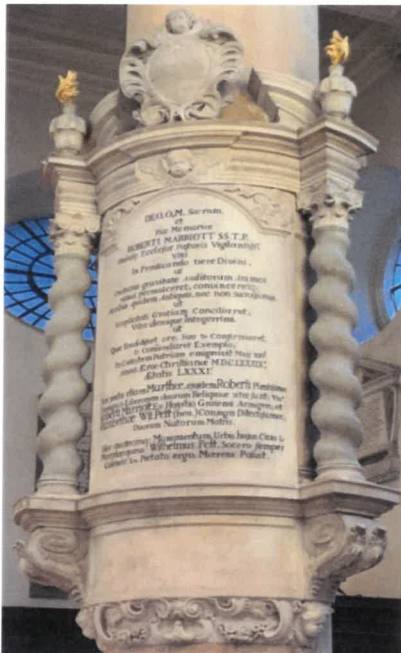
***Robert Marriott** was Rector from 1662 until he died in 1689 aged 81 years. His monument in Latin describes him as 'Professor of theology and the watchful pastor of this Church. A man as a preacher so truly Divine that by his preaching he at once charmed and convinced his hearers. A man in whose character old time integrity was so tempered with a sweetness that he made simplicity loveable. A man of so spotless a life that his own example confirmed and recommended what his lips taught.' This monument sits on the column nearest the altar to the north.*

*Of the churchwardens, **Adrian Quiney (1630-1692)** was a Grocer in Bucklersbury and was in partnership with **John Sadler (1632-1680)**, also a Grocer and druggist. The business had been inherited through their families which both heralded from Stratford on Avon and their fathers each in turn had married the other partner's sister. These were important enterprises at the time as drugs were largely imported and had to come through London. Bucklersbury druggists effectively had a monopoly on their supply.*

Adrian was not only a churchwarden for many years but his aunt by marriage was William Shakespeare's daughter, Judith. Adrian was one of nine siblings.

Another of the largest grocer/druggist in Bucklersbury was **John Lilburne (1629-1678)** who has a splendid memorial in the Church which sits on the column to the south nearest the altar. He is named as 'Grocer and Citizen'. This pairs with Robert Marriott 's monument.

John Lilburne married Isabel, one of Adrian Quiney's sisters. Adrian includes various of his nephews and nieces from this marriage amongst the beneficiaries of his will. John Lilburne's business was seen as a touch larger than the Quiney/Sadler one – '11 hearths' as opposed to Quiney/Sadler 's '10 hearths'.



Robert Marriott



John Lilburne

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*The laying of the Foundation stones for the second Church of St Stephen on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1429 had attracted an equally distinguished group of attendees to those in 1672.*

*The congregation had become too large to be accommodated comfortably in the old building and so plans were made for a replacement. This was to be built on the Eastern side of the Walbrook stream, more or less on the present site of what was to become the second and then the third Church of St Stephen.*

*Those laying stones on that day were*

- **Sir Robert Chicheley (1366-1440)**, the principal benefactor and past Lord Mayor twice over, Grocer

*Sir Robert Chicheley also laid a stone as the donor of the site. His eldest brother Henry Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Henry IV and a former rector of the first Church (1396-97), and elder brother Sir William Chicheley together with Sir Robert purchased the ground where the Church now stands and the Church was built at Sir Robert's expense.*

- **Sir Robert Whittingham**, Alderman of Walbrook
- **Sir Henry Barton**, past Sheriff and past Lord Mayor
- **Sir Robert Otele (Oteleye)**, past Sheriff and past Lord Mayor, Grocer
- **Thomas Catworth**, past Lord Mayor, Grocer
- **John Penne**, Alderman of Walbrook,
- **Ralph Barton**, past Sheriff

*Stones were also laid by the Churchwardens and by 'many mo of ye same parish'. There is no record of Thomas Southwell, the Rector, being there. He had been appointed the year before at the same time as being appointed a Canon of St George's Chapel Windsor.*

*On 19<sup>th</sup> December 1502 the patronage of St Stephen Walbrook was gifted to the Worshipful Company of Grocers, probably by Richard Lee III, a Grocer and a grandson of Sir Richard Lee, also a Grocer and past Lord Mayor. The patronage later came to be shared with Magdalene College, Cambridge.*

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The cost of the rebuilding of the City after the Great Fire in 1666 was enormous. Coal tax money levied by the government was used to build the basic fabric of the City churches, with the individual parishes being left to pay for interior fixtures and ornament.

As work on the Third Church commenced, the Churchwardens held a dinner on 4th March 1673 where the guests included **Christopher Wren (1632-1723)** and **Robert Hooke (1635-1703)**, Wren's collaborator on many of his projects. The meal was at the Swan Tavern in Old Fish Street which was a favoured eating place close to London Bridge. It cost nine guineas 'to Entertain Dr Wren and other Surveyors with the Vestry and others came to'. Robert Hooke who wrote an extensive notebook/diary mentions having 'Eat with great stomach'. During the meal the parish indulged in some oblique bribery of Wren by providing 'to the Surveyor General per order of the Vestry twenty guineas for a gratuity to his Lady to incuridge (encourage) & hastin the Rebuilding of the Church'.

The new Church was completed in 1679, seven years after the Foundation stones were laid. A Vestry minute of 27th May 1679 notes that one or two parishioners were appointed to assist the Churchwardens 'in the seating of the parishioners'. In this year there were one or two marriage entries, the first ones entered since 1665.

In this year, the Vestry voted to give 'Sir Christopher's Lady a further ten pieces of gold' and to this end they held another dinner. This time it was at the Bull's Head Tavern in Walbrook when the principal craftsmen were also invited.

In conclusion, in 1680 the Vestry agreed a payment of nine pounds and ten shillings 'for a hogshhead of Claret to be presented to Sir Chr.Wren'. A hogshhead amounts to about 52 imperial gallons.



St Stephen Walbrook

City of London